

Recycling, Composting, Foodware, and Produce Bag Requirements



The City of Palo Alto has adopted a number of Zero Waste requirements to protect local watersheds and oceans from plastic pollution, reduce litter, meet state recycling and composting mandates, and reach our community's Zero Waste and climate protection goals.

Use this guide as a checklist to help ensure that your business meets all the requirements and complies with current zero waste ordinances.



For service questions, or to request on-site technical support and training, contact GreenWaste of Palo Alto at PAcustomerservice@greenwaste.com (650) 493-4894



For more information, videos, and other resources, visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/foodware
zerowaste@cityofpaloalto.org (650) 496-5910

RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING REQUIREMENTS: COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

☐ Set Up Waste Stations

☐ For Customers

If customers bus their own tables, then your business must have waste stations with recycling, composting and landfill containers conveniently accessible for customers. This would include waste stations in both indoor and outdoor seating areas.

☐ For Employees

Containers must be accessible to employees for recycling, composting and landfill in areas where waste is generated. This includes food prep areas, behind the counter, and in the kitchen.



☐ Use Color-Coded Containers

Waste stations must have a blue container for recycling, a green container for compost, and a black container for landfill.



☐ Post Signage

Waste station containers must be properly labeled with color-coded signs.

Free signs and a customizable sign-making tool are available at:

www.cityofpaloalto.org/wgwtools

You may also request free signs and labels from GreenWaste of Palo Alto:

(650) 493-4894

PAcustomerservice@greenwaste.com



RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING REQUIREMENTS: COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

☐ Sort Properly

☐ Empty Recyclables

Recyclables in the blue container must be empty of foods and liquids. Pour out liquids, scrape out food, and wipe out oily or sticky residue.



Pour out liquids.



Scrape out food.



Wipe out oily or sticky residue.

☐ Place Items in the Correct Container

Compliance is met when all containers — whether they are used by customers or employees — contain only items acceptable in that specific container. Proper setup, labeling, training and monitoring (checking bins and correcting misplaced items) is important for success.

Enforcement will be based on “contamination,” which happens when items are not placed in the correct container.



☐ Provide Training

It is required to train and educate tenants, residents, employees, contractors, and janitors on how to properly sort waste. Training must be done for new employees and annually for all employees. Training can include:

- Providing handouts
- Watching a video on proper waste sorting
- Sorting demonstrations to learn what goes where and how to empty recyclables

Videos and handouts can be found at:
www.cityofpaloalto.org/wgwtools



A free, in-person training session can be requested from GreenWaste of Palo Alto outreach staff. Contact them at (650) 493-4894 or email **PAcustomerservice@greenwaste.com**

Starting July 1, 2020 – New Custodial Bag Requirements

☐ Color-Coded Bags

If bags are used to line refuse containers, then transparent blue tinted bags are required for recycling containers, transparent green compostable bags are required for compost containers, and clear bags are required for landfill containers.

☐ Compostable Plastic Bags for the Compost Container

Compostable plastic bags must meet ASTM D6400 or D6868 standards of compostability or be Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified.

FOODWARE & PRODUCE BAG REQUIREMENTS: COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

☐ Replace Banned Traditional Plastic Foodware with Reusable or Compostable Alternatives

Utensils, straws, stirrers, drink plugs, and other small foodware items must be reusable or compostable.


Compostable items must be accepted in the City's compost collection program.



☐ Offer Compostable Foodware Only Upon Request or at a Self-serve Station

Signage is available to help you explain the change to your customers:

www.cityofpaloalto.org/foodware



Disposable Foodware Ordinance Purchasing Guide

PLASTIC STRAWS, UTENSILS, STIRRERS, AND OTHER SMALL PLASTIC ITEMS ARE NO LONGER ALLOWED IN PALO ALTO.
Use this guide to choose alternatives that comply with the ordinance.

Best: Reusable Foodware

Palo Alto's long-term plan is to require the use of reusable foodware. Using reusables conserves natural resources, prevents waste and litter in our watersheds and oceans, and can save your business money. Free technical assistance is available to help you switch to reusables.

Better: Plant Fiber & Wood

- Wood-based chopsticks, utensils, stirrers
- Paper straws
- Hay straws/stirrers

Okay: Compostable Plastics


- Products that meet ASTM D6400 or D6868 standards for compostability
- BPI-certified® compostable plastics
- BPI-certified® utensils

Avoid:

Avoid products that are NOT labeled COMPOSTABLE and/or carry unsubstantiated claims. These claims DO NOT mean the product is compostable:

- Made from plants
- Biodegradable
- Degradable
- Will decompose
- Photodegradable
- Made from corn starch
- Bio-based

*BPI CERTIFIED Look for this logo to know if the product you are purchasing has been tested and certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute.



Download this Purchasing Guide to help you find acceptable foodware:
www.cityofpaloalto.org/foodware

Straws, Utensils and Stirrers Available Upon Request

Popotes, Utensillos y Agitadores Disponibles Bajo Pedido
吸管、餐具、和攪拌棒僅應要求提供

To protect our local watersheds and oceans, Palo Alto's new Disposable Foodware Ordinance requires these items to be compostable and available only upon request.

Para proteger nuestras cuencas hidrográficas locales y el océano, la nueva Ordenanza de Alimentos Desechables de Palo Alto requiere que estos artículos sean compostables y estén disponibles solo a pedido.

柏羅奧圖為了保護分水嶺和海洋立下了一次性丟棄餐具條例，餐具必須是可堆肥的，並且要在顧客要求之下才能提供。

For more information:
www.cityofpaloalto.org/foodware
zerowaste@cityofpaloalto.org
(650) 496-5910



☐ Replace Traditional Plastic Produce Bags with Compostable Bags

Bags used to hold produce, meat, bulk food, or other food items must be acceptable in the City's compost collection program.

The City's compost program accepts paper bags and bags made of compostable plastic if they meet the ASTM Standard Specifications for compostability (D6400 or D6868), or the product is Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified.

